

The Second Coming of a Gaben

by Botchman

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Summary: Life in 2020 is hard for Valve's latest janitor Gordon Freeman. Out of work and out of options he looks to his creator and co-worker Gaben for help, only to be let down yet again. But could it be he has a greater role yet to play in The Lord of Valve's master plan?

1. Chapter 1

****The Future of Half Life and the Second Coming of Gaben.****

Gordon Freeman stared miserably at the mac screen's spurring display. Through it, he could plainly see three-dozen C.G fantasy characters using swords, clubs, and spells to crush one another into dust.

Dota 12 sure seemed like an interesting game, for those who liked the fantasy genre, only it just didn't seem on par with previous game created by Valve software. Older games, likeâ€¦

"Gordon!"

Gaben snapped, sucking up the last of the roast chicken through his soda straw.

"Come on I ain't paying you to watch the play testing, we already got ten other guys for that. So if you want to continue receiving a pay checkâ€¦"

Gaben pointed underneath his desk, down toward his sweating crotch in sweaty sweat pants.

"I suggest you make yourself usefulâ€¦" the Lord of Valve adjusted his waste band.

Nodding solemnly, Gordon stiffly got down on his hands and knees, then, licking his lipsâ€¦picked up the specially modified donut with

liquid bacon interior and tossed it on the desk.

"Hey thanks Gordon," Gaben said ravenously, taking a syringe from his desk drawer and transferring the porky liquid from the donut straight into his own veins.

"Yeah! Oh hell yeah that's my little whore!" Gaben croaked, his eyes rolling into the back of his head.

"I've been trying to reach that liquid orgasm for hours, oh, and the toilet down the hall needs unblocking again, I think Dave Kircher may be eating too many packs of marshmallow peeps. Yeah that'll do! it was Dave. Completely sure."

In the center of Gordon's vision, the quest objective flashed up in white type -writer text.

'Clean out peep shit', then faded away.

Freeman looked doggedly at the cleaner's cart he'd dragged in an hour ago, adorned with polish, sponges, mops, and lemon Jiff. In truth, it had taken that long just to clean Gaben's knife collection, as he always did on the first of every month. December 1st 2020, and forty years old. Today had been no different. Gordon felt weary, as if he were looking at all the years that had gone by like stations passed by a freight train.

It was then that Gaben sensed the discontent in his janitor, and let out a breath which sounded like a whale had died.

"If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times, Gordon!" He began, using all the muscle fiber in his arms to push his chair away from his desk.

"If we don't have any work for you, we don't have any work. But that's how Valve operates, if no two people decide to start development on Half Life 3..."

Gordon flashed two fingers and Gabe with one hand, and three with the other.

"No Gordon, Christ, , there will not be a Half Life 2 Episode 3 you known that for years! Now I know it seems unfair but if we compromise our principles of work-ethic flexibility Valve will soon descend into a soulless corporation like E.A, and judging from their latest take over of Ohio and Georgia, we are the only thing standing between them and their domination of the world's gaming."

Gaben trailed off, but locked his powerful eyes to Freeman's, un-phased as they were by the passage of time.

"I'm sorry Gordon, it was the all I could do just to keep you as a custodian working at Valve. But you do a good job dammit, so you should feel proud in that."

But Gordon had already taken his cart in hand and was pushing it out of the office door, saddened by the prospect that his golden years would forever be behind him.

Undeterred, Gaben leaned over his desk, creating a 'rubber-ring' of

fat that drooped over the sides.

"C'mon Gordon, we're busy enough as it is shipping Portal 5, so don't take it personally hey, HEY, GORDON, I MEANT WHAT I SAID ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO. C'MON, YOU WANT SOME TF2 HATS? I GOT A WAREHOUSE FULL OF THEM!"

But Gordon Freeman had already turned the corner, with only the smallest hint of a tear welling up in his silent eyes to keep him company.

The rest of that day passed like any other. The monster turd clogging up one of the toilet stalls impeded its flush to such a degree The Freeman could only clear it by creating a massive back pressure in the plumbing.

After Gordon sent the floater demon back to hell, he tried to get up from where he was sitting on the cubical floor, and finding his knees weren't as strong as they used to be, used the porcelain bowl as purchase. This however, proved to be fatal.

A white hot pain flooded through Gordon's wrist and he yelled aloud, before slipping on the wet floor, and falling backward amongst his cleaning utensils. The health display in the bottom left corner of his sight flashed, spelling out 96% from his previous one hundred.

It was his right wrist, he knew. Over time, RSI had severely weakened the joint that connected his hand to his forearm, this due to over-zealous use of his crowbar in the entirety of the Half-life series.

Towards the end Gordon could barely hold it in his palm.

He should have known better. Crowbars were made to be used with BOTH HANDS, not swung about madly with only one.

There had been an almighty crash, but no one had come to check on the scene, and after a minute had elapsed, Gordon slowly got to his feet to assess the damage.

'MINOR FRACTURE DETECTED' was what he would of heard had he been wearing his infamous H.E.V suit. But where that was now, lost to the confines of the virtual props department, he had no idea.

Gordon tried to move his fingers and felt the small after shocks of tendon hitting bone. He reflected on how he could really do with a dose of morphine at that moment, but then again, without the hazard suit it was all just wishful thinking.

'_Take away the suit and what do you have left?_'

Despite his inner doubts, Gordon realized he still had a job left to do. With his free hand he began gathering up all the spilt cleaning equipmentâ€|when he noticed something in the toilet bowl.

Staring up at him from the shifting surface of the water was a middle aged man with an annoyed look on his face. Gordon sighed at what reflected features had become.

"Oh Gordon!..." said Gaben's head suddenly, bobbing up and down in the water.

"There you are, we've had a spill down in the snack room, could you come clean it up? Ta, Thanks, bye."

The Lord of Valve bit on his bottom lip, then, using it to pull himself up out of the john swanned out of the tiled room and disappeared to the canteen.

Gordon looked on after him, catching his real reflection in a mirror opposite him.

A tired OLD man looked back up at him, his hair streaked grey on either side of his furrowed head.

'_You'll be waiting forever, no sequel. All those loyal fans out there, die hard after all this time, and in the end, they won't remember your name.'_

2. Chapter 2

The Future of Half Life and the Second Coming of Gaben.

For Freeman, home was not the warm studios at Valve software. If he could have moved away from the place, out of Washington altogether, then he would have done so, however he was still intellectual property of Valve. The only knowledge of physics that was needed at that place was how to program a physics engine.

Besides, when a problem had emerged in the past, he'd usually shoot it dead, which solved the said problem. All that studying, and the only work he had ever done as a scientist was push a button that caused the Black Mesa incident, and that was over twenty years ago. Gordon groaned out loud, the memory made concrete by the cold December sky.

For Gordon Freeman and Alyx Vance, home was a rusted trailer three blocks down in an equally rusted trailer park.

By this time, Alyx sitting over her cereal, steadily eating her way to the bottom of the bowl. She noticed Gordon step meagrely in through the thin metal door, so she allowed a small smile to flicker onto her face, extenuated by the deep black hair band that held her dark hair at bay. After all this time she still liked to wear it, as a good luck charm that had see her through all her battles. Including the one she was fighting now, the one that was ever present in Gordon's face.

From experience she had learnt that it was hard work making conversation with her fiancÃ©e. True, Gordon was the best listener a women could ask for, but she felt that he was merely collecting what she had to say, storing it deep down inside himself, never to be mentioned again.

"Hey sweetie, I was just having a late breakfast. Didn't have much of an appetite is all..."

Gordon nodded, changing his green work and overalls for a pair of

jeans and a blue T-shirt which had Gaben's sexy multi-chinned face printed on it.

"Did they have any openings at Valve today Gordon?" Alyx asked, a little worriedly.

"It would probably be best for you to have a less physical job, what with your wrist and all. "

But Freeman merely shook his head.

All day at that shitty job that Gaben called work, and THIS was the subject Alyx continuously brought up. Didn't she understand that he just wanted to get away from it all? Didn't she realise that he wanted time for himself sometimes where he could abandon the scent of lemon jiff?

There was a sound of metal on china. Alyx had dropped her spoon into her cereal.

When Gordon's eyes finally flickered back, Alyx was wearing a bitter grimace on her normally sunny face.

She arrested Gordon with her bright green eyes.

"Look, you're a man that prefers action to words, I get that, and in fact I think that's a better kind of man..."

Alyx looked down at the floor.

"But what am I supposed to do when I don't get action OR words from you Gordon? Where does that leave me? Cos as far as I can tell, I'M ALONE!

The shaking had begun, and from what Gordon could tell, it had been building up steadily inside her beautiful brown skin for weeks, perhaps even months.

Alyx hid behind one of her hands, the tears flowing freely now.

Gordon touched her shoulder, but immediately had it shrugged off. Lost for words couldn't even begin to describe his feelings. He had let her down, badly, and getting her trust back now would be a harder thing to do than grasping anti-matter from air.

Without any warning Alyx had decided air was exactly what she needed. She grabbed her purse lying spilt open on the table top and yanked open the trailer door.

Gordon tried to move over to her but stopped abruptly as Alyx turned round in the doorway.

"You don't have to be a hero anymore Gordon, all you have to be is my hero..." She stammered, smudging her mascara with the back of her hand.

"I've already let go of my glory days, you call me when you're ready to let go of yours!"

The door slammed with the force of a supernova, leaving Gordon alone in the broken down lunchbox he called a home.

The Freeman had previously saved an entire nation, but now it seemed he couldn't save the person he most cared about from hurt.

As the late afternoon began to slide into evening Gordon decided the best way to clear his head was for him to take a walk.

He rummaged around the cramped living space and presently found a woollen pullover that he pushed over his head before setting out into the cold twilight.

His breath formed thin clouds of vapour that mixed with the orange glow of the horizon, and a great jealousy over came Freeman of how it could mingle into nothingness, where as he had to stay behind and try to loose himself in the busy streets.

He walked onwards, ever onwards, past an ocean of nameless faces until he came to one of Washington's less affluent neighbourhoods. Boarded up windows surrounded him on either side, stitched up eyes that had once belonged to the faces of many store fronts, but which like his own franchise, had been undersold and neglected to the point of ruin.

Turning a corner Freeman came face to face with a familiar sight. It was a shopping complex of sorts, or had been several years ago. A large, churned up parking lot sat decaying on top a large hill, hemmed in by a dozen two storey buildings that prevented it from falling down the slope.

It was all coming back to Gordon now. There used to be a P.C World up there in the late 90's and (He was jogging towards the derelict site as the memories came thick and fast) it was there he had attended the store release of the first half-life.

Stamina was becoming an issue now, but Gordon kept on jogging toward that reminder of happier times, the where he had but for a few short hours been king of all P.C gaming. All this and more was waiting for him, just beyond this final hurdle, he imagined to himself. That was if he didn't run out of steamâ€¦ No. He mustn't ever run out of steam.

3. Chapter 3

The Second Coming of a Gaben.

(Should mention, as user Urbsun Psychic has pointed out, I have a tremendous amount of respect for Gabe Newell and urge you to support the man and the legend.)

When Gordon Freeman reached the boarded up store his glasses had fogged up considerably. Cupping his hands around his brow only added to the condensation and so a few more seconds had to be spent wiping away the moisture. Even so they seemed like hours. Bit by bit, an empty store, perhaps one hundred metres across gradually came into Gordon's view.

Next to no light penetrated what remained of the tinted windows, and

under any other circumstances Freeman himself would have been a little creeped-out by the deathly quiet store, it's old shelving cascaded upon the bare flooring like bulky skeletons. Then again, he was sufficiently warmed by the glory he had experienced there. Even if the store had been in Ravenholm, the sense of gladness he exuded would have been enough to calm his fears.

Perhaps there was a way of getting inside? Freeman reflected on a possible breaking and entry.

It wasn't like he wanted to STEAL anything. He just wanted to take a look around, visualise the hundreds of faces that had once gathered there to see him, eager to purchase a copy of his adventures and experience through his own eyes the happiness a well-made game could bring.

Gordon must have spent a whole hour deliberating on the would-be break in because when he checked again the sun had fallen below the cityscape horizon. He finally recognised this for in its absence had come a gradually increasing film of darkness, expanding all the shadows of the broken shops until they were one.

There was a door that led into the P.C world down a back alley, but now another thought struck Freeman. What was he doing? Back in their trailer Alyx didn't have much of a basis to be angry with him for clinging onto the past, but if he forced his way into this place, it would show how stubborn he was to turn the clock back to his glory days.

Somewhere, a couple blocks down, a dog barked into the night air. Freeman let out a strained sigh, resting his lined fore head on the cold brick. There came the voice again.

Let go. This isn't you anymore. You are not the hero of worlds. You are a cleaner. You have a wife. You need to make sure she's all right. Go home.

Slowly, reluctantly, Gordon took his hands off the wooden boards, and resigned himself to the slow walk back to the trailer park. He shook his head sadly, nursing his injured wrist, all the more painful for being exposed to the cold.

Turning down the back alley, Gordon retraced his steps to the dis-used parking lot, when he heard an almighty '_**Crash**_' ahead of him. The Freeman almost jumped out of his skin.

A trashcan had fallen to one side, then several voices were heard, all of them laughing. Whose ever they belonged to had clearly been drinking.

Then the young men came into full view. Though little more than silhouettes in the sinister night, the anxiety Freeman felt was palpable.

Pitiful Gordon. You've defeated whole armies at your prime. It's all down hill from here and those jokers they can sense it, like blood from an open wound.

The words seemed to drift from some unknown origin, in one ear, then out the other.

Freeman opened up his stride, as he grew closer to clamour hoping that he would pass by the gang relatively un-noticed.

In a few seconds and at barely ten metres away one of the grating voices was discharged upon him.

"Oiâ€|Oi, nice glasses mateâ€|" it went, followed by shared laughter.

Allowing himself a quick glance over, Freeman could see that there were five youths in total, all male, all looking at him in an expression of uniform mirth.

It didn't matter. All he had to do was get out of the alleyway. After that it would just be open space before Gordon could get downhill and join the main-road.

Simple. It was a matter of dynamics alone.

"Hey Professor, you got any money for us mate?"

One of the men leant out to Freeman, then, to the physicist's horror, moved swiftly in front of him, blocking his exit.

It felt like a singularity had opened up in Freeman's stomach. Gordon tried to step to one side of his assailant, a bald man in blue hoodie, but he merely moved to compensate.

The other four men, dressed in chains and loose fitting clothing walked closer to their ringleader, in essence, vultures to a corpse.

Gordon let the fear take over for a full second, then swallowed it down.

He turned out both his pockets, then raised his hands as if to say _"you see, nothing you're interested in."_

For a moment this seemed to have worked. Then the bald man shot out an arm and snatched Freeman's glasses from his face.

Gordon's vision immediately deteriorated. Angrily he swiped at the man but even if he had the depth perception, he would not have been able to drag them out of his hands.

This didn't seem to go down well with the rest of the thugs. From behind their legs they flashed an assortment of melee weapons, a pipe, a couple baseball bats, andâ€| (Freeman stared in disbelief, the irony not quite sinking in.) a blasphemous crowbar. What were the odds?!. Of all the bludgeoning instruments this nameless dropout could have chosen. He chose the one that had once meant the liberation of all humans.

The ringleader pulled out a switchblade and thrust it out at Gordon.

"Stay back geek boy! Unless you wanna get stuck!"

Small tears of frustration welled up in Gordon's eyes, but he refused

to let them out. He may have fallen from the hero he once was, fallen long, and fallen hard, but the one thing he had left was his dignity, and he would be damned before he let a bunch of worthless bastards take that away. He would rather DIE before his dignity was broken up.

There was a cracking sound as Freeman balled up his fist. That being his right fist. His fractured wrist burnt as if it were on fire.

This was going to hurt really, really bad. But it would hurt more to run away.

A mocking dance was taking place, the bald leader wearing the thick-framed glasses and hopping madly from one foot to the other.

"Too bad I c..can't study Pâ€|Pâ€|PUSSIE!" he cried, to the raucous laughter of the dross.

His eye caught Freeman's and for a brief moment felt surprise to see him still standing there.

"THE HELL YOU LOOKING AT SPAZ!" He shouted.

"GET LOST, BEFORE I CUT YOU!"

But Freeman had already lunged forwards. In retrospect, it was the last thing the man had been expecting.

The fist crushed into his nose with a wet snap, partly from Gordon's wrist, and partly from the thugs' broken cartilage that released a fresh flow of blood.

Somewhere to Gordon's side, his glasses clattered to the ground.

The Freeman let out a yell of pain. There was no doubt about it. His wrist was broken, but the desired effect had been achieved. Equivalent exchange. Nothing else mattered now.

The bald man put his hands to his face, swearing loudly, but when he took them away again, a killing intent was in his eyes.

"I've always wanted to ice a dude, same for ma BOYS. You just made the last mistake of your life."

From out in the night, there was a flash of silver. Gordon tried to arch away from the knife blade but was only halfway successful, as there was a ripping sensation down his shoulder.

The hazy limbs of the gang had all blurred together now, and in Freeman's poor eyesight it meant there was no way to dodge their blows.

Something hard hit his leg, causing Gordon to fall backwards onto several wooden boxes. They split apart on impact, and between landing awkwardly and being sliced the health guage in the corner of Freeman's eyes flashed and read '64' per-cent.

He wanted shout, but no words came out.

It was the end. The definite end to a life cut in half. All Gordon could think about was leaving Alyx on her own and how it would wreck her. A sweet woman like that, still beautiful after all this time, still faithful, and the great Freeman would die here, leaving her without a soul in the world.

I'm sorry Alyx, I'm so sorry.

He let out a pained breath.

Let them come.

But nothing befell him. Seconds passed before one of the men spoke.

"Jesus Christ! DO YOU SEE THAT!"

Gordon opened his eyes to see two slits of white light high above him, (which upon his notice) expanded into a pair of wrathful eyes.

Then something dropped down from the roof at the speed of that light, straight on top of the knife-wielding thug.

A powerful shock wave blasted through the earth, hurling the rest of the gang off their feet, and lo Gaben stooped, clad head to pudgy toe in shiny black spandex.

Gaben then stood up in crater he had made, smothered in red mist and shards of bone. The prick with the knife had been blown away the second Gaben's ass meat had collided with his skull.

"If you're gonna use a knife you should use it as an extension of your own arm." The Lord of Valve announced, no doubt a reference to his own vast experience.

At this, the man in the hoodie cried out to his posse "IT'S THE FAT MAN!" and charged, fists raised in anger. The rest of the group took his lead.

Gaben saw the first punch, and in retaliation, merely side stepped out of its arc. The bastard's clenched fist missed, but was then slingshotted into a wall as it passed through Gaben's gravitational pull.

There was a wet crunch and he slumped to the floor moaning. It was clear Gaben was too much man for these pussies.

From Gordon's view on the concrete, two more bastards had swung their baseball bats at Gaben's head but he just deflected the blows with his multiple chins, the perfect chain mail.

Three men stood standing now, the two baseball pricks and the third bastard in torn jeans wielding a blasphemous crowbar.

But Gaben did not take kindly to this number. His eyes glowed with golden deliciousness as he pushed the two other pricks aside and stared into the third bastard's soul.

"There is no three,..." the all-powerful announced softly, and with that the man started to sweat buckets, dropping the crowbar, and backing toward a wall. The baseball bat pricks had stopped their useless assault to watch.

"Where-ever there is online piracy I shall seek it out, where-ever there exists data corruption, it shall be re-programmed whole."

Super Bat-Gaben walked over to the third thug who had fallen to his knees in awe of the telekinetic visions he was being sent.

Opening the e-mail attachments in his mind, the thug saw beautiful fields of RAM, filled with computer desks, and many many people, young and old who were all playing TF2 in a large grid.

When they were tired, they lay down in the RAM to bed themselves for the night. When they were thirsty it was Gaben on the throne who gave them Mountain Dew, milked from his own nipples, and which also cured cancer.

But it was not just the people in this one field that were so blessed. Any game, from any time, to be played with anyone, was what Gaben promised. It was for this purpose that Valve had been erected on the earth, as well as the goal of Gaben's long career in gaming.

"My life is complete." The thug orgasmed. "Kill me."

"Laterâ€|" said Gaben. "For now you must be the one to spread the word, like I spread my butter. Eighteen pads and well-tempered."

Gaben then laid a fatherly hand upon the man, smiling through to his enlightened soul.

"You have a new name my child, to match your new mindset, it shall be Count Chocula, in honor of my favorite cereal."

Count Chocula began crying with joy, and then ran off to spread the word of Lord Gaben.

He then turned his attention to the two other bastards, who were once again readying their weapons.

"It is a shame,â€|" said Gaben sadly.

"That not all the peoples of this world allow their data to be saved."

The Lord of Valve grasped at his belt buckle with both his hands, then carefully pulled down his spandex pants, making sure not to get the hems overly dirty, and draped them over an old mail box.

Upon completing this, Gaben did the same for his 'Left 4 Dead' under wear, exposing his lower half for the thugs to see. To their amazement, in place of a penis was a colossal chrome plated mini-gun, complete with fortified barrels and damped sub frame.

"You seeâ€|" Gaben began.

"â€¦to start the reciprocating process, I should press the engage switch, in addition, to moving the lever to the upright position."

The barrel started whirring, then spun on its axis.

"â€¦And have fun."

Screams exulted from the two men as a hail fire of custom cartridges (That were the equivalent of one bodily fluid or another.) rained down upon them and ripped them to fleshy confetti. In truth however, they had already died from penis envy milliseconds before the bullets had pierced their skin.

"A real wasteâ€¦" Gaben said, as he tucked himself away and put his clothes back on.

He turned to look at Gordon who was still lying on the floor, attending to his broken wrist.

"Not a good night Gordon?" Gaben asked, reaching out a hulking arm to help him up.

"â€¦For me it's just getting started. You see, this is my night job. I couldn't just sit behind my desk as the gaming world went to ruin. I decided to do something about it. Something drastic, to restore the balance! EA has to be stopped Gordon. And Iâ€¦"

Gordon gaped, as lightning flashed the sky.

"I AM VENGEANCE, I AM THE NIGHT, I AM GABEN but not to worry. To you Gordon it's just me, Gabe Newell!"

4. Chapter 4

The Second Coming Of A Gaben. Chapter 4.

__('Gordon Freeman Saved My Life' was written and composed by 'MiracleofSound', as seen on Youtube. Please support the official release.)_

Slowly, Gordon splayed his left hand out on the ground and used it to push himself up on his feet. Gaben was standing over him with such an air of manliness that Gordon felt slightly emasculated from just being in the same space as him. The raw, un-checked power he had used to destroy those gang members was that of legends, for the legend of this man dated as far back as the early nineties. And that was some serious shit.

Gaben removed his cape and cowl, shaking out his lion's mane hair in an ecstasy of fluid movement.

"Gordon, are you alright? I was doing my nightly rounds when I noticed you walking down the street, concentrating on trucking right, you heard a dark voice beside of you andâ€¦"

Freeman merely raised a hand in confirmation, and then got up with the full intention of going home and leaving his boss in the alley.

Ever the loving father, Gaben walked after him, refusing to let Freeman walk away in such distress.

"I didn't just mean that in a physical sense Gordon, you've been a bit off for a few months now. I just assumed you would be the one to come forward about it, I'm sorry for taking this long to realize. Here, patch yourself up!"

From out of his pant pocket Gaben pulled out a green cylindrical tube filled with medical gel and surrounded by a rectangular white casing. Gordon instantly identified it as a much sought after med-kit of his previous title, though whether that was just something Gaben always carried around with him, Gordon couldn't tell.

Before Freeman could show his surprise Gaben tossed it at him, and upon reaching out his hands instantly absorbed it into his own body. A medical beeping was heard in Freeman's ears alone, followed by a warm feeling that spread from his core outward. When he looked back at the health display again he read '89%' and felt much better for it.

But it wasn't just his overall health that had benefitted. Gordon peeled back the sleeve of his woolen jumper to inspect his wrist, which upon several generous rotations, he found to be completely mended. He looked with questioning gladness at The Lord of Valve.

"The Lord taketh away, but the Lord also givethâ€|" Gaben said smiling.

It was clear that Freemans's permanent injury had been cured from the med-pack's simple exposure to Gaben's funky aura.

"â€|You should have told me there was something wrong with your wrist Gordon. I would have been more than happy to heal it for you had just asked."

Freeman nodded, giving Gaben a weak smile. He was thankful, of course he was. But the sad truth was this wouldn't change anything. So what if his wrist was better, it only meant he could scrub a toilet that bit faster, or mop a floor in one-third the time.

The only reason Gaben even kept him around anymore was so that he could have a trophy of his first accomplishment as a game's designer. And the trophies you most treasure, stay locked up in the cabinet and are never touched again, slowly tarnishing, slowly rusting. Never mind if said trophy was a human being or not and if that trophy needed a purpose. All Gaben could offer him were hats, and that was a poor consolation

Freeman was about to turn tail and run back to the trailer park if needs be but Gaben implored him to wait a while longer. There was a curiously pained look in his generously sized yet chiseled face.

It was either by his infinite wisdom, or telekinetic abilities that Gaben had sensed the topic that was imprinted on Freeman's mind and it seemed he was finally about to give some answers.

"We need to talk Gordonâ€|" Gaben said finally.

"I know you feel very bitter with me over the Half Life series being postponed as long as it has, but you have to trust me, this is all part of a plan that has been years in the making."

"The truthâ€|"

Gaben paused, then, deciding once and for all on his course of action, addressed Gordon once more.

"â€|The truth is that your time is coming again Gordon. Valve needs you, I need you. Everyone on this planet needs you to save the gaming world, and to enlighten those that have lived in darkness for so long."

There was a tiny popping noise as Freeman's mouth fell open a little way.

Gaben pulled over a trashcan, and sat down on it, instantly crushing the poor thing to half its size. He at once became all the more benevolent, all the more fatherly, as father was a role that had come to suit him very well.

"After Episode 2 in 2007, I wanted more than anything to continue the Half Life series and that's the Gaben's-honest truth. But E.A was becoming stronger. If I released Episode 3, and then Half Life 3 when I originally intended, not everyone in this world would be saved by its salvation, because by then half of all gamers were either 12 year-olds that cursed on C.O.D or corporate slaves that liked whatever un-finished game EA told them to like."

Gaben put a hand on Gordon's shoulder; righteous tears were welling up in his gorgeous piggy eyes.

"I'm sorry Gordon, but you see the most important part of this whole plan has been given to you. You who thought his glory days belonged only to the distant past. We have to save all of my children before Half Life 3 comes to be, for if they received it unto themselves in their present condition, they will never see it's its true beauty. They would turn it away because it wouldn't be a game with kill-streaks, and so their eyes shall never be opened."

The alleyway had grown bitterly cold now in the December evening, but Freeman didn't feel it on his exposed skin. So much had changed so fast. One moment he was at the bottom of the pile, reaching back to past fame, and now he was looking forward,

But then came the problem, the all too pressing problem that weighed on Gordon's chest and stuck fast. He gave a silent chuckle, then pushed back his grey lined hair.

Now, after all this time, did he really have anything more to give? In his prime he would have taken on the challenge without hesitation, but these days the loading screen of his eyesight took a little longer to load every day, and he was a million miles away from being the fit young man that could speed run Half Life 2 in less than a couple hours.

When Gordon looked back at his hands they were shaking.

A blinding fear overtook him. He'd lost everything, everything he

was, but even if he had the opportunity to take it back, he couldn't remember how to fight in the same way. Fighting Breen, and the Hunters, it had all been out of instinct, a reflex. It would take months to re-establish the physical memory of holding a gun, or shooting a rocket-launcher. He wasn't ready for thisâ€|HEâ€| HE WASN'T READY!

The words, the panic, all of it rushed through Freeman's layered mind. There was no way he could do as Gaben asked and save a world of loyal fans at his age. It was way too late to play the hero. He would be destined to let everyone down all over again.

Two firm hands grasped Gordon's shoulders. Gaben took the physicist up in an embrace, as manly as the Australian chest-hair of Saxton Hale. A firm clap on the back came next, and as Gaben pulled away Freeman could see the infectious strength frothing-over in Gaben's masculine countenance.

"Oh sorryâ€|" Gaben saidâ€| "Do I have something on my cheeks?"

He wiped the frothy strength from his face with use of a handkerchief which he stored his Bat-belt.

"I know you're having doubts Gordon, but believe me when I say you can't afford to doubt yourself. You have a million people all good and ready to call you a loser but don't you ever say it of yourself because, in their ignorance, it means that they've already won."

But Gordon wasn't listening, couldn't listen. He was too busy searching the floor for his glasses that had fallen away in the scuffle.

"But in all seriousnessâ€|" Gaben startedâ€|

"â€|You know, there's a friend of mine, and his name is Eric Wolpaw. But years ago Eric got sick, he got so sick that it became impossible for him to work at Valve, and to do the things he loved, for the people that loved the things he created. The day came when he brought his resignation to my desk and said that he couldn't go on."

Freeman said nothing. Gaben continued.

"So I said to him, 'Your job is to get better. That is your job description at Valve. So go home to your wife and come back when you are better.' And he did Gordon, he took that Ulcerative Colitis that was draining him and tore it a new asshole. So now, I'm saying the same thing to you..."

There was something about Gaben's tone of voice that made Freeman turn to look at him in that instance. Something deep within him, something that had been untouched for all these years was slowly flaring up inside of him, kindled by the words Gaben now spoke."

"I mean to say, you're gonna get better Gordon. That's your job from now on, because in a way, it's always been your job. And I'm gonna help you reach your peak again, even if I have to go so far as to take time off work."

And that meant he was super fan-fukin serious because Gaben was a cool dude to place work as his first priority. (For the benefit of

steam users.)

The two men stood in the alleyway for a few seconds longer, creator and creation locking eyes. Then came the Man-shake, as bold as brass and as loud as thunder, echoing round the decaying shop fronts. The fleshy palms of both men clapped together, triggering their biceps to rise in unison.

"Lets do it." Confirmed Gaben.

Gordon Freeman couldn't help but smile. He had the Lord of Valve on his side again, and now was the time to start training.

From the perspective of Gordon Freeman, the next several weeks seemed to pass in a matter of minutes. Two minutes ten seconds to be precise. And they went something like this.

GORDON FREEMAN SAVED MY LIFE!

[Instrumental]

Camera pans left in a busy Washington main street to see Gordon Freeman in tracksuit bottoms and sleeveless shirt with the Half-life 'lambda' symbol upon his chest, running on the sidewalk against the flow of on-coming traffic. At this point in his run he is very much out of breath but the ragged persistence in his eyes show that he's going to stick it out.

Out in the streets of City 17
>Civil Protection run a rigid machine<p>

Break down my door, take me down to the station
>They got ideas that I got information<p>

Gaben is shown moving alongside Gordon; he is exhausted to a greater degree, sweat drenching his lion's mane hair and bright red T-shirt. Camera pans out to reveal Gaben is on a massive Segway, yet still moving his arms as if in the motion of running. A fine down pour of sweat plasters the pavement behind him, washing numerous screaming pedestrians into the road.

My natural charm is only getting me so far
>When out of the black I see the shape of a crowbar...<p>

A mid-shot of an Aperture science test-chamber door. The door's composite parts rotate around, then open to reveal Gaben in an XXXXXXXX -sized lab coat who promptly shows Gordon in. Gaben then steps through the door after Freeman, taking up the entirety of the circular archway to do so, like the correct peg in a round hole.

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>Fight for freedom with a brainstorm<p>

**An improvised boxing ring has been constructed in the middle of the white tile floor. It's composed of insulated cabling which act as ropes and glass tiles on pistons that create a raised platform. In the center stands Freemans opponent, the weighted companion cube. Gaben looks at Gordon and nods. Gordon returns the nod and, hitting his knuckles together, hands Gaben his glasses and steps towards the

ring.**

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>Like Chuck Norris in a geek form<p>

Cut to a corner of the ring. There is an almighty thud as Gordon in boxing gear is thrown back from off-screen into the cables. He lands sprawling but quickly recovers himself. Gordon grits his teeth at the companion cube that is still sitting stationary in the middle of the ring, having not moved an inch.

Completely silent, a violent creature
>Despite looking like a geography teacher<p>

Gaben and Freeman stand in the foyer at Valve software, the trademark red Valve standing on its podium between the two of them. Gaben raises two fingers to his temple and stares furiously at the large metal wheel.

Almost immediately, the valve shudders under Gaben's mental powers and rotates to the bottom of the screw-head, where upon it sticks fast.

Gaben smiles and gestures to the wheel.

"**All yours Gordon, Lets treat this and an experiment.**"

**Gordon flashes a gruff smile, the determination of his former-self now evident on his ragged face. He lunges, grabs the valve with both hands and proceeds to strain against it, trying to wind it up to the top of the shaft as Gaben continues to push it down with his awesome telekinetic abilities. **

Moved at the speed of a cheetah in its prime
>Apparently he ain't running on Valve Time<p>

I watch as the Combine are turnin' to flee yeah!
>They vanish into thin air like Episode 3 yeah!<p>

**Gordon frees it for a moment, grunting all the while with the extreme force he is combatting, and winds it a quarter of the way up the screw-head, before Gaben narrows his eyes and focuses his energy, causing the valve to wind all the way back down again and throw Gordon away, (who stumbling) then backs out of an open window. Gaben cringes between bites of a monster sized chocolate bar as there is a metallic thud from down below and a car alarm starts screeching out into the open air. At precisely the same time, a door opens behind Gaben to reveal Freeman breathing heavily and covered in glass. He takes only a second of rest before he grapples onto the valve yet again and starts straining yet again. **

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>Fight for freedom with a brainstorm
Gordon Freeman saved my life!

>Like Chuck Norris in a geek form<p>

**The Gaben-copter is hovering over the same street in urban Washington where Freeman is going for another run. Gaben himself sits in the cockpit tracking Gordon's progress below with a pen and clipboard. (Of course without any paper, this is proving to be

difficult.) There is the sound of an industrial horn below him. Gaben looks out his left window to see that his take away has arrived, a sixteen ton bucket of fried chicken hangs suspended by crane next to him, some twelve stories in the air. **

**Meanwhile, down below, Freeman is running somewhat faster than before, so much so he is on the verge of sprinting. He probably shouldn't have startled the horde, but then again this could very well help boost his stamina. A hundred or so infected scuttle after a small orange dot like ravenous ants and as Gaben considers if these are ideal conditions, he strains to reach his chicken over the abyss. **

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>Fight for freedom with a brainstorm<p>

**A broom is fixed onto one wall of the Gaben-Coptor's interior with the inscription 'Hunger-repellent' hanging over it. Though this is the tool Gaben chooses to reach his light snack, below it are situated several other emergency utilities that he resorts to in a crisis. These include the 'Blood-loss repellent which features an I.V, transfusion bag full of gravy, and 'No-mustard repellent' which is a bottle of mustard. **

Freeman reaches the safe room just in time, throwing the door closed before the infected can lay their unclean hands on his sensuously, stubbly beard.

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>Like Chuck Norris in a geek form<p>

**Cut again to the underground boxing ring at Aperture science. Freeman in boxing gear moves swiftly from side to side anticipating the companion cube's movements. Freeman chances it, suddenly nailing a left blow on its heart insignia and a right on its corner, causing it to tumble over with a loud clatter. Gordon raises his orange gloves in a victory stance, turning to Gaben for his benevolent judgement. Gaben merely smiles, shakes his head sadly, then points a large finger behind Gordon indicating that he should turn around. **

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>(You'll never get back what you lost)_
>Fight for freedom with a brainstorm
**(You'll never get back what you lost)**

Freeman turns, the camera panning around to show his viewpoint. The companion cube is right side up, and ready for another bout, seeing this makes Freeman cringe because he knows he's in for a bruising. (Not that landing on it's side would make any difference to a cube.)

Gordon Freeman saved my life!
>(You left Black Mesa far too long)_
>Like Chuck Norris in a geek form
**(You'll never find where you belong)**

"Keep it up Gordon! " Shouted Gaben from across the ropes, but even he could see the doubt starting to well up in Freeman's brow again. It didn't seem to be a matter of whether his motivation would last,

more like how long it would be until it failed again.

What Freeman needed was a push in the right direction, or in Gaben's case a roll down a steep hill.

End
file.